size buses in fixed-route service. The largest single item of expense in bus operations is the driver's wage, which usually does not vary regardless of bus size. There is very little difference in fuel costs. Although the initial cost of a minibus may be lower, this is offset by a shorter life span. Thus, the operating costs of standard-size and minibuses are nearly the same. If only one trip per day requires standard-size seating capacities, it would be cheaper to operate a larger bus all day with many empty seats during most of the day than to operate a second minibus for the peak trip. Nevertheless, minibuses play important roles where volumes are always low and where maneuverability is paramount, as in many dial-a-ride or rural operations.

HIGH-CAPACITY BUSES

The United States has turned increasingly to the use of high-capacity buses, long used in Europe and elsewhere. The high-capacity bus, despite its higher initial cost, is frequently attractive economically on high-density routes because of savings in labor costs. The two basic types are the double-decker bus and the articulated (bending) bus.

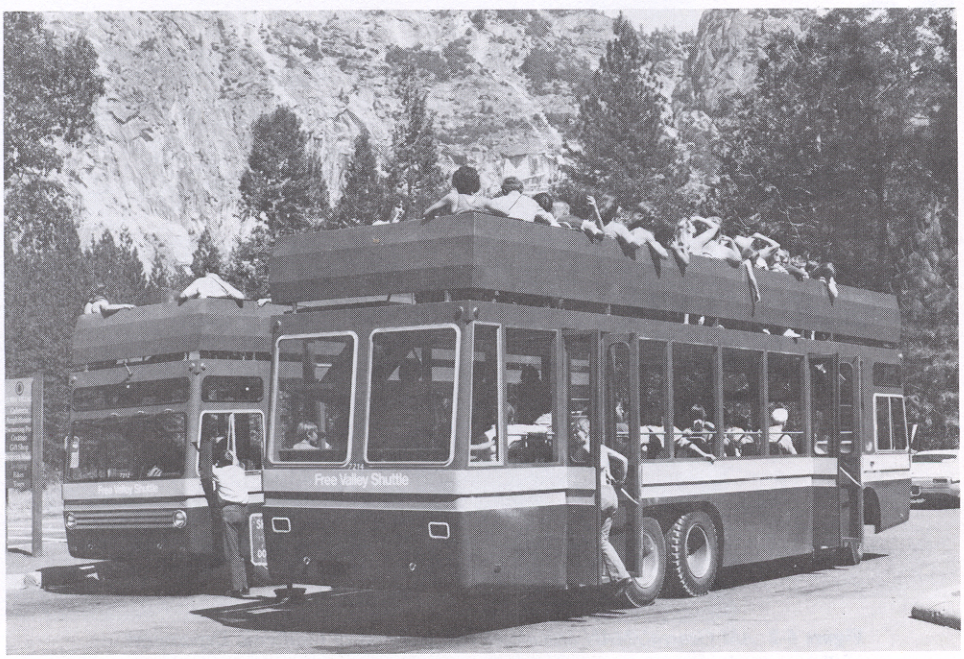

Figure 6-1 *Double-decker, gas-powered tourist bus in Yosemite National Park. Such buses are used in areas not open to autos. (courtesy of California Department of Transportation)*

The double-decker bus, although still popular in a number of European cities, particularly in Britain and the British Commonwealth countries, is actually less prevalent now in the United States than it was many years ago when they were used